

Embec Care Ltd The Wise Choice Fact sheet

Pandemic Flu outbreak

Treat symptoms as they arise. Try to keep well hydrated with plenty of clear fluids. Take paracetamol or ibuprofen (children should not be given aspirin because of the risk of Reyes syndrome) for aches and pains, and use simple remedies such as cough syrups and vapour rubs. Try to rest as much as possible.

As with all infections, good hygiene is absolutely essential to reduce the risk of spread or contact with the virus:

- Wash your hands regularly.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Use tissues and dispose of them carefully.
- Clean hard surfaces regularly with a standard cleaning fluid.
- Avoid close contact with people who have fever and a cough.
- The effectiveness of wearing a face mask in preventing transmission of the flu virus isn't yet clear, although it may give some protection to those people such as health professionals who work closely with someone with symptoms of flu.

If you think you have developed flu-like symptoms, you should stay at home and avoid contact with other people. Contact the [National Pandemic Flu Service](#) who will use a checklist to diagnose if you have swine flu. If diagnosed, you will be given a voucher number for a 'flu friend' to get anti-viral drugs from a collection point.

The treatments are not a cure but can reduce the risk of infection for those who have been exposed to the virus, reduce the ability of a person with the virus to pass it on, and shorten the course of the illness when someone has flu. Most importantly these drugs treatments reduce the risk of serious complications and death. For maximum effect, the drugs should be given as early as possible to someone who has the flu.

However, as with any medicines there may be side effects from anti-viral drugs. Many people with swine flu will only have mild symptoms and they may decide that a combination of rest and simple remedies for symptoms are all that they need.

Swine flu symptoms begin within two days of exposure, at which point the person is most infectious. Swine flu is highly contagious and once infected a person soon develops symptoms very similar to those produced by seasonal flu, including:

- High fever (usually above 38 °C).
- Cough.
- Sore throat.
- Headache.
- Aching muscles.
- Chills and shivers despite fever.
- Exhaustion or fatigue.
- [Diarrhoea](#) or a stomach upset

Don't worry about eating pork products – there is no evidence that swine flu can be picked up that way. Even if virus is present in the meat, thorough cooking will destroy it.